

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) In combination, a champagne bottle including a neck and a glass ring, a cork, An easy-to-open overcapping cover (1) for a bottle of sparkling wine (2) sealed with a cork (8) having a head (80), a metal cork wire (3) having a tightening wire (30) for fastening the cork to a the neck of said bottle removably secured under a the glass ring (20) of the neck of said bottle and further including an opening twist or loop (31), an easy-to-open overcapping cover (1), comprising:

a head (5), a skirt (4) of a film or sheet material,

an easy-to-open means provided on said skirt and including an upper line of weakness (43) and a lower line of weakness (44)

wherein said lower line of weakness (44) is located on the cover at a height H that defines a partition of said cover with an upper part (10) and a lower part (11), the height being such that after said cover and said sealed bottle have been assembled said lower line of weakness (44) breaks when said cover is first opened to provide access to said cork once said upper part (10) has been removed, said lower part (11) remaining intact on the neck,

wherein said upper line of weakness (43) is separated from the lower line weakness (44) by a distance L at least equal to $0.5 H$, wherein H is the height between the lower line of weakness (44) and the top end of said cover (1).

upper (43) and lower (44) lines of weakness defining an opening strip 45 having a width L, and wherein said upper line of weakness and said lower line of weakness are substantially parallel and substantially extend around the whole circumference of the cover,

a gripping tab (46) disposed at a free end of said opening strip,

said gripping tab (46) comprising notches (460, 461) disposed at upper and lower ends thereof and intended to direct the tearing of said opening strip (45) during said first opening such that when said bottle is opened for said first time said opening strip (45) by pulling on said gripping tab (46) and removing said upper part (10) along.

2. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1, further comprising means for fastening said lower part (11) to said neck, and means for reinforcing said upper part (10) so that when said bottle is opened, said upper part (10) is removed wholly.

3. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein gripping tab (46) is positioned according to a generating line of said cone and is located between two lines of weakness (43, 44) and fastened to said opening strip (45), said tab (46) using said notches (460, 461) to automatically direct the tearing strain when said cover is opened towards said two lines of weakness (43, 44) such that said cover is opened easily, ensuring the remaining lower part 11 of the cover located beneath said lower line (44) stays intact and said cork wire 3, if fitted, is freed.

4. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein said tab (46) comprises notches or recesses (460, 461) made in said film or sheet material constituting said cover.

5. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein width L_1 of said tab (46) ranges from 0.5 L to L with L ranging between 1.5 and 4 cm.

6. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein said lower part (11, 65) comprises a lower reinforcement (67) means that increases the mechanical properties of said lower part (11) and adheres to an inner surface of said lower part (11, 65) at least along and parallel to said lower line of weakness (44), said lower reinforcement (67) further comprises an adhesive layer over a surface that can be activated and that is intended to adhere to said neck.

7. (Original) Cover of claim 6 wherein the entire said lower reinforcement (67) comprises a layer that can be activated and constitutes a circular strip (68) the width of which is at least equal to 5 mm and that can extend over all or part of the height of said lower part (11) and that is adjacent to at least the upper edge of said lower part (11) along and parallel to said lower line of weakness (44).

8. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 6 wherein all or part of the inner surface of said lower part (11) comprises a layer of glue or adhesive as fastening means that can be activated and that constitutes a bonded part 66 that adheres to said neck, typically after it has been activated.

9. (Original) Cover of claim 8 wherein said glue or adhesive comprises a complex layer consisting of a layer that adheres to the glass and a layer that adheres to the material comprising the inner surface of said cover, typically aluminum, paper or a layer of plastic material or varnish.

10. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein said upper part comprises an upper reinforcement means (47) selected, particularly in terms of type and position on the inner surface of said upper part, to increase the mechanical properties of said upper part such that when said bottle is opened for said first time said opening strip (45), which is created by pulling on gripping tab (46), removes the whole of said upper part (10) along with it and to enable said upper line of weakness (43) to be removed by said upper reinforcement means.

11. (Original) Cover of claim 10 wherein said upper reinforcement means (47) comprise a lateral end (472) that reinforces all or part of said gripping tab (46).

12. (Original) Cover of claim 11 wherein said lateral end (472) extends beyond said gripping tab such that said lateral end (472) assumes the role of said gripping tab when the cover is first opened.

13. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 10 wherein said upper reinforcement means (47) comprise a reinforcement strip or line that includes a lower part or edge (471) adjacent to lower line of weakness (44).

14. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 13 wherein said reinforcement means (47) comprise an upper part or edge (470) along the same reinforcement strip, said upper (470) and lower edges (471) being separated by a width L , that is constant or otherwise depending on angular position α , width L ranging typically between 0.4 and 4 cm, average width L

being preferably between 0.3 and 0.7 times H, H being the height between the lower line and the upper end or top of said cover (1).

15. (Original) Cover of claim 14 wherein width L is not constant and increases, typically regularly, with the angular position α , width L being at its smallest at said tab (46) where angle α is equal to 0.

16. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 10 wherein said upper reinforcement means (47) cover the entire interior surface or inner periphery of the free part of said opening strip (45).

17. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 10 wherein said upper (47) or lower (67) reinforcement means consist either of a thin sheet or reinforcement strip, typically of a plastic material (preferably PET or PP), paper, or a layer, strip or line of plastic, resin, varnish or paint material.

18. (Previously Amended) Cover of claim 1 wherein said cover material is selected from a group consisting of Al, Al alloys, Sn, Sn alloys, shrinkable plastic, Al/PO/Al complex multilayers, Al/PO/paper, PO/Al/PO, and charged PO/Al/PO, wherein Al refers to a layer of aluminum, PO a layer of polyolefin (preferably PE) capable of containing a charge that is typically mineral.

19. (Original) Cover of claim 18 wherein the thickness of said material in sheets or strips may range between 25 and 50 μm when the material is aluminum or an alloy, between 110 and 150 μm when the material is tin or an alloy, between 60 and 100 μm when the material is a shrinkable plastic film and between 60 and 110 μm when the material is a complex multilayer material, typically Al/PO/Al.

20. (Previously Amended) Method for producing covers (1) of claim 1 comprising the steps of:

- cutting out a blank of arc (6) of said skirt said film or sheet material of height H' ,
- providing said lower line of weakness (44) and said notches (460, 461) on an axial edge (60),
- providing an additional means being selected from an upper line of weakness (43), an upper reinforcement means (47, 48), a lower reinforcement means (67), a means (66) for fastening all or part of lower part (11) to the neck,
- applying a radial line of heat- or pressure-activated adhesive (63) on the other axial edge (61) of said arc, except on the matching part or opposite said tab (46),
- rolling said arc (6) on a chuck by folding axial edge (60) back onto the other axial edge (61), applying a line of adhesive between the two edges, or activating said pre-applied radial line of adhesive, to shape said skirt (4) by pressing edges (60, 61) together and possibly creating said grooves (9), and a head (5) is assembled or created by adding a part of the head and fastening it by thermobonding to upper rim (64) of said skirt that is possibly shrunk and folded.

21. (Previously Amended) Method of claim 20 further comprising the steps of depositing an upper reinforcement or a lower reinforcement either by bonding a strip according to the mechanical characteristics required, which are resistance to tearing, and of a required shape, which is part of an annular sector, or by using a gun to apply a strip or line of melted plastic material that is adherent and that hardens when applied.

22. (Original) Method of claim 21 wherein said upper and lower reinforcement means are a self-adhesive label of suitable shape applied to said arc (6).